

Microfinance/Women's Empowerment in Sierra Leone: Civic Entrepreneurship, Advocacy and the Power of Partnerships



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Abstract

- This poster will highlight microfinance/women's empowerment projects in Sierra Leone, administered by Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) and funded by the Rotary Club of Indianapolis.
- This example of civic entrepreneurship will demonstrate how providing women with the opportunity to start their own small companies contributes to:
 - building a support system and sense of community
 - addresses the need for social, economic and political stability in a country recovering from civil war and devastating disease.
- The poster will feature the results of efforts to redesign the RSWR website and develop a social media marketing strategy.

Microfinance/Women's Empowerment

- A passion of mine is microfinance/women's empowerment, inspired by the work of Muhammad Yunus and because of my experiences teaching an entrepreneurship course here at SolC every year since 2003.
- Concept of civic entrepreneurship/social entrepreneurship.
- I provided scholarships for five Service Learning Assistants for the project in Mexico, funded by the IUPUI Center for Service and Learning.
- We created a website for the project in Mexico – in both Spanish and English.
- Then I connected with Betty Tonsing through the Rotary Club of Indianapolis and her affiliation with Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR) and this resulted in projects in Sierra Leone.

Current Projects: Sierra Leone, 2015--

- Partners are Rotary Club of Indianapolis, Rotary Club of Freetown (Sierra Leone) and Right Sharing of World Resources (international microfinance organization)
- First the civil war, then the Ebola outbreak, means that people in Sierra Leone have really been struggling – and yet life must go on.
- Small loans for women to start their own small companies.
 - Includes training in small business management, money management and empowerment.
 - The women's group there is responsible for providing approximately 10% of the money for each project.
- Each project is approximately \$5,000.
- Also total redesign of Right Sharing of World Resources website (by graduate student Shilpa Pachhapurkar) and advice on a social media marketing strategy (by graduate student Cori Faklaris).

Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR)

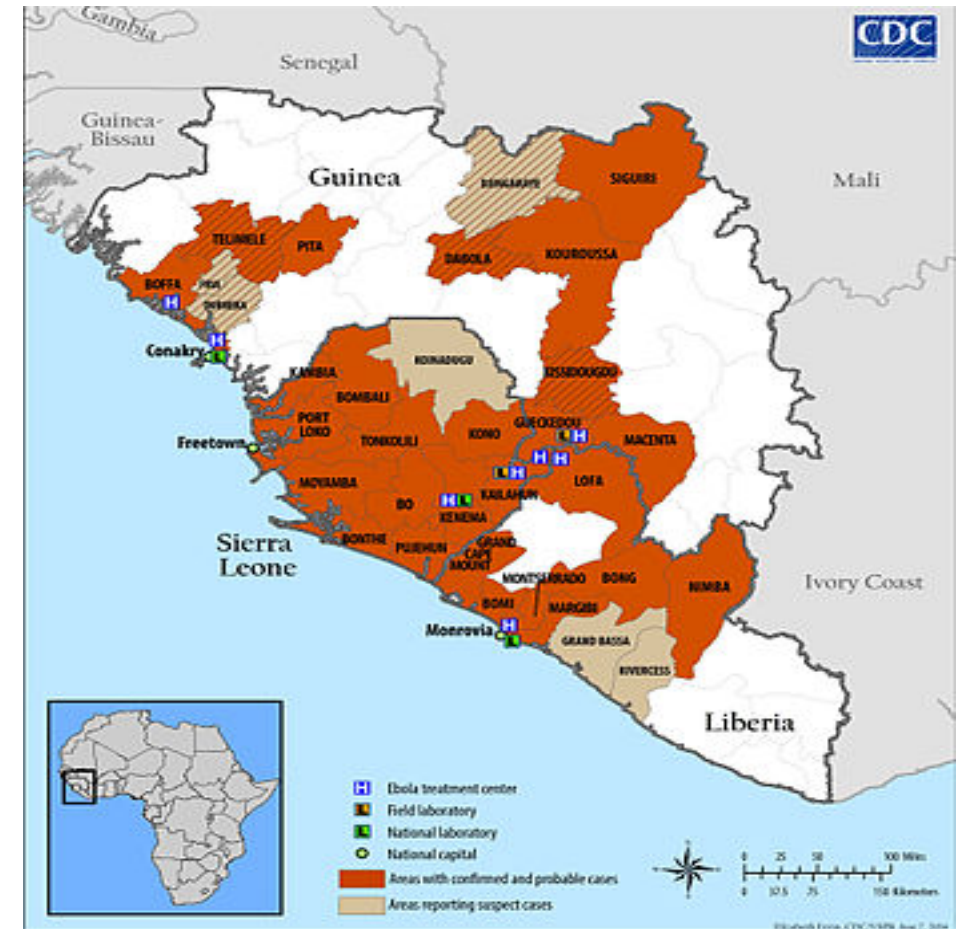
- Founded in 1967 as part of the Fourth World Conference of Friends of the Religious Society of Friends.
- Became its own 503(c) entity in 1999.
- Has reached over 12,000 women and their families.
- Headquarters in Richmond, Indiana.
- Works in Sierra Leone, Kenya and south India.
- See <https://www.rswr.org/>



Where is Sierra Leone?



Ebola outbreak



Scenes from Graced Team Project



Bonthe District,
Southern Province

30 poor rural women
farmers aged 25-40

Photographs taken by
Jackie Stillwell,
General Secretary,
RSWR



The local school

Extracting palm oil -- this is the business the women who planted cassava had to take up in order to repay their loans.





Typical house

Preparing a meal





Village houses



Washing clothes



Paying back their loans

RSWR Projects



Current Project: Mayogba Rural Women Farmer's Association



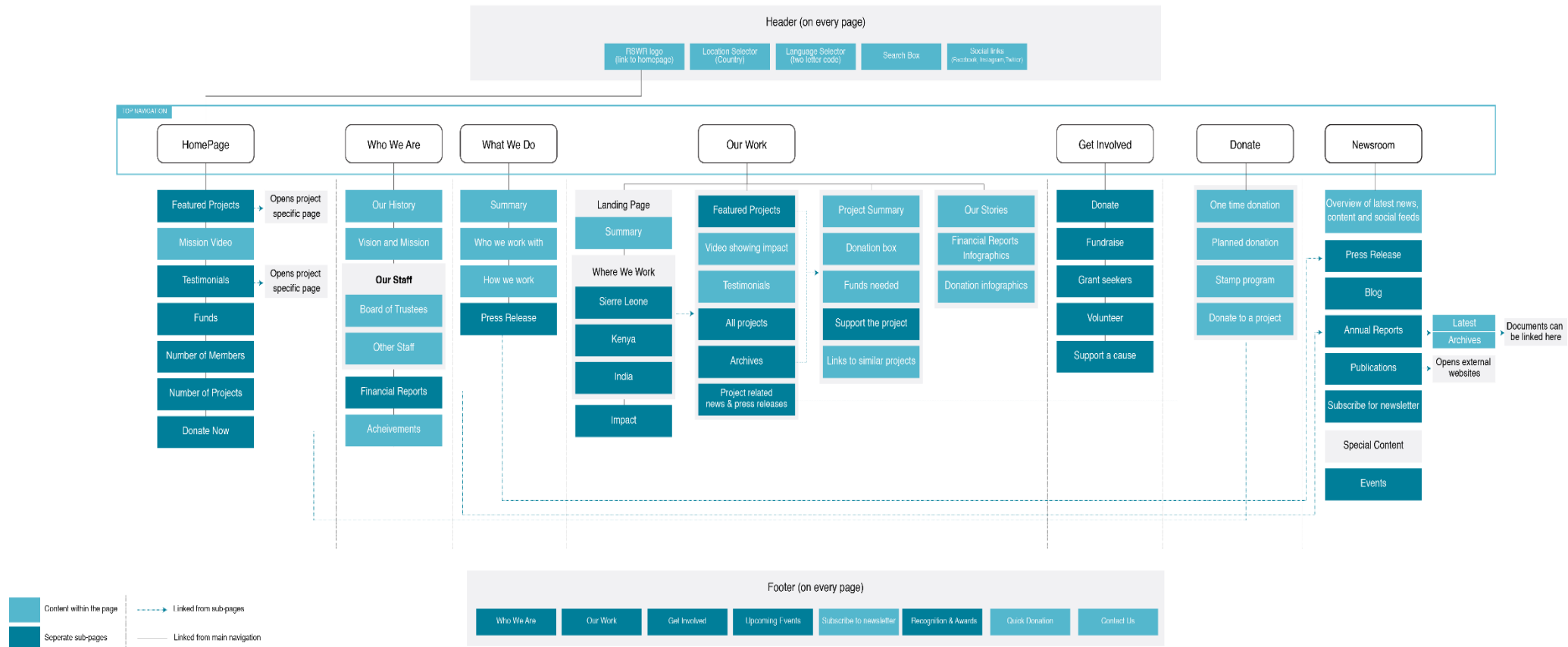
Moyamba District

IGP	# of women	Loan per woman	Monthly income after expense	Repayment plus interest	Net monthly income
Cassava	4	SLL.500,000 (\$123)	SLL.325,000 (\$80)	SLL.85,000 (\$21)	SLL.240,000 (\$59)
Potatoes	2	SLL.600,000 (\$147)	SLL.385,000 (\$94)	SLL.102,000 (\$25)	SLL.283,000 (\$69)
Groundnuts	6	SLL.500,000 (\$123)	SLL.425,000 (\$104)	SLL.85,000 (\$21)	SLL.340,000 (\$83)
Corn	6	SLL.500,000 (\$123)	SLL.485,000 (\$119)	SLL.85,000 (\$21)	SLL.400,000 (\$98)
Rice	6	SLL.500,000 (\$123)	SLL.314,000 (\$77)	SLL.85,000 (\$21)	SLL.229,000 (\$56)
Vegetables	10	SLL.454,000 (\$111)	SLL.425,000 (\$104)	SLL.77,179 (\$19)	SLL.347,821 (\$85)
Goats	8	SLL.500,000 (\$123)	SLL.360,000 (\$88)	SLL.85,000 (\$21)	SLL.275,000 (\$67)

Redesigning the RSWR Website

- Review of 70+ websites of NGOs/Non-Profit Organizations
- UX Analysis
- Information Architecture
- Rapid Prototyping
- Wireframes
- Enhanced Wireframes
- Design Decisions

Redesigning the RSWR Website



Favorite Quotes

- “Not all of us can do great things. But we can all do small things with great love.” ~ Mother Teresa
- “Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has.” ~ Margaret Mead
- “Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime.” ~ Chinese Proverb
- Please contact us if you have questions: Sara Anne Hook, sahook@iupui.edu and Betty Tonsing, btonsing@aol.com